

# HIV/AIDS Misperceptions Among Hispanics in California

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## 1. Background:

Despite high knowledge levels about HIV transmission among adults in the US, myths and misperceptions about HIV/AIDS continue to be prevalent. In California, HIV/AIDS misperceptions are more prevalent among Hispanics compared to other racial/ethnic groups in the state.\* HIV/AIDS misperceptions influence individuals' perceptions of HIV positive individuals, may lead to stigma and discrimination, heightened anxiety and sense of fatalism, and may deter HIV testing for fear of being stigmatized. In addition to increasing HIV/AIDS knowledge and awareness, another key responsibility of those charged with HIV education and prevention, is tackling HIV/AIDS.

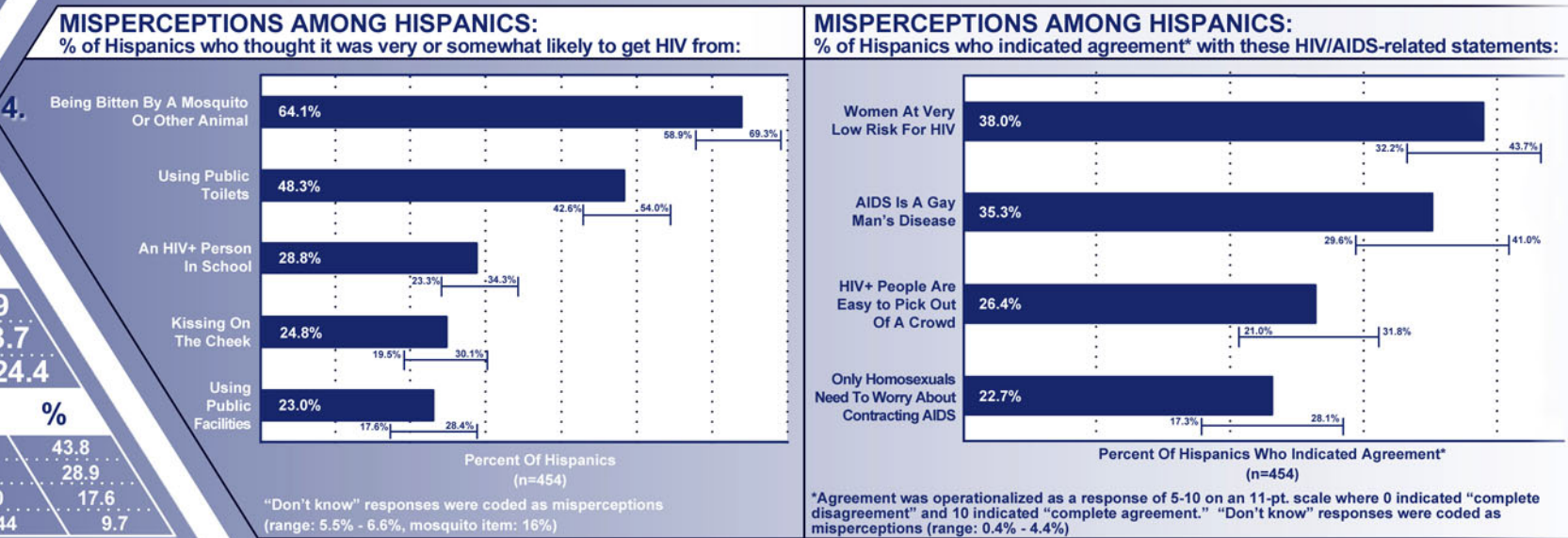
\* Moskowitz, J.M., Henneman, T.A., Young Holt, B. California 2000 HIV/AIDS Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors (KABB) Survey: Methods and Results. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley; 2002.

## 3. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Hispanic Study Sample: (unweighted)

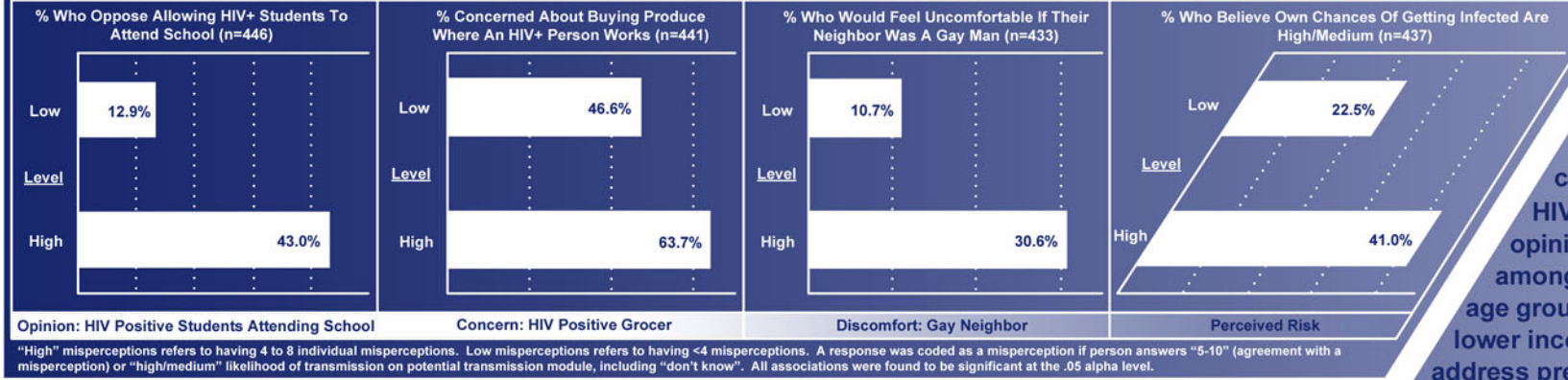
Hispanic Study Sample (N=454)								
Gender			Age (in years)			Education (in years)		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Male	169	37.2	18 - 24	104	22.9	< 12	190	41.9
Female	285	62.8	25 - 34	144	31.7	= 12	153	33.7
			35 - 44	113	24.9	> 12	111	24.4
Language				N	%	Income (in USD)		
Spanish	247	54.4	45 - 64	81	17.8	< 25,001	199	43.8
English	207	45.6	> 64	12	2.6	25,001 - 49,999	131	28.9
						≥ 50,000	80	17.6
						Missing	44	9.7

## 2. Study Population and Data Collection:

Data were collected statewide between April and June, 2000 using a random digit dial telephone survey of California adults (18 and older). 1,739 adults participated in the survey; 454 indicated that they were Hispanic. Analyses of this subgroup were performed using Stata 7.0. Sample and post-stratification weights were applied to account for probabilities of selection and the age, gender and race/ethnic distribution of California's adult population.



## 5. Observed Correlates of Misperceptions (Possible Implications):



## 6. Mean % Misperceptions for Subgroups of Hispanics\*:

Gender		Age		Language of Interview		Education		Income	
Mean% (95% CI)		Mean% (95% CI)		Mean% (95% CI)		Mean% (95% CI)		Mean% (95% CI)	
Male	29.6 (23.6, 35.6)	18 - 24	28.0 (22.6, 33.4)	Spanish	41.0 (35.8, 46.2)	<12	44.1 (37.9, 50.2)	<25,001	38.7 (33.5, 43.8)
		25 - 34	23.1 (18.9, 27.4)			=12	24.9 (20.8, 29.0)	25,001 - 49,999	27.6 (19.2, 36.0)
Female	32.4 (27.7, 37.0)	35 - 44	23.5 (19.0, 28.0)	English	15.9 (12.3, 19.5)	>12	10.4 (7.2, 13.7)	≥50,000	12.8 (8.6, 17.0)
		45 +	45.3 (36.3, 54.4)			Missing Income: 44 Observations			

\* Average number of misperceptions out of a total of eight perceptions  
All sociodemographic characteristics, except gender, were found to be associated with misperceptions at the .05 alpha level.

## 7. Conclusion:

The extent of misperceptions among Hispanic adults in California is alarming. In a state where the percentage of the general population represented by Hispanics has been rising and is currently at 32.4%, effective HIV/AIDS programs greatly depend on the guidance and support of targeted epidemiologic research on HIV/AIDS misperceptions of Hispanics. As many as one quarter of Hispanics believe that HIV can be transmitted by casual contact. As many as 35.3% believe that AIDS is a gay man's disease. HIV/AIDS misperceptions have been found to be significantly related to opinions and concerns about HIV positive individuals as well as risk perception among Hispanics. These misperceptions are most prevalent among the oldest age group, individuals who conducted the interview in Spanish and individuals with lower income and education. Those charged with HIV/AIDS prevention need to address prevalent HIV/AIDS misperceptions as they may not only play a role in stigmatization of HIV positive individuals, but may increase risk perception and impact mental health.

For More Info:  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/aids/reports>  
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